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RECOMMENDATIONS RELATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES WHEN WORKING WITH ADULTS WITH SPANISH SURNAMES.

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THE FIRST PART OF THIS DOCUMENT, RELATIVE TO GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING LOCAL ADVISORY GROUPS FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS INVOLVING MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE SOUTHWEST, SETS FORTH THE OBJECTIVES, COMPOSITIONS, AND OPERATIONS OF LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES, INDICATES STEPS IN CONDUCTING INITIAL MEETINGS EITHER WITHOUT A CURRENT PROJECT OR AFTER A PROJECT HAS ALREADY BEGUN, AND OFFERS SUGGESTIONS ON TRAINING IDEAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN GROUP PROCESSES AND PROBLEM SOLVING. THE SECOND PART LISTS SCHOOL BOARDS, TITLE 3 CENTERS, PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS, MIGRANT PROGRAM CONTRACTORS, INDIVIDUALS, AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION IN 35 CALIFORNIA COUNTIES. ALSO INCLUDED ARE 26 REFERENCES. (LY)

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Recommendations Relative to the Organization of Advisory Committees when Working with Adults with Spanish Surnames

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MAX RAFFERTY—SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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FOREWORD

The Bureau of Adult Education of the California State Department of Education was awarded a grant in May, 1966, under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for a project entitled "Statewide Plan for the Development and Implementation of Curriculum Involving Adult Students with Spanish Surnames." One of the objectives of the project was to develop guidelines for use by adult education administrators in the organization of local advisory committees. In addition, it was hoped that various people representing a cross-section of the state's population would be identified as having interest in participating in this kind of program.

This publication represents the coordinated efforts of Mrs. Patricia Cabrera, Adult Education Project Specialist of the Bureau of Adult Education; George T. McCormick, Educational Coordinator, Tulare County Community Action Agencies; and members of the staff of the Tulare County Office of Compensatory Education.

The first part of the document, relative to guidelines for organizing local advisory committees, was adapted from a publication of the Tulare County Community Action Agency and the Office of the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools entitled "Guidelines for ESEA--Local Advisory Committees." The second section of the document lists the names of various organizations from which representation might be drawn; e.g., school boards, Title III Centers, PTA's, Migrant Program Contractors, and various individuals.

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I - ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The third largest minority in the United States is concentrated in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas; that minority is the Mexican-American ethnic group. Of the 3,500,000 people who, according to the 1960 census, constitute the total population of the Spanish surnamed in the United States, 2,850,000 live in two states: California and Texas. The great majority of this group came from Mexico after 1900 as part of a wave of immigrants who entered the American labor market as common laborers in the agricultural or industrial areas.

Although Mexican-Americans are found in all walks of life, some three-fourths of Mexican-Americans, as compared with 54 percent of all employed "Anglo" men in the United States, are manual workers. Concentration in the unskilled occupations means that Mexican-Americans characteristically earn much less than most groups in the United States. And, consistent with their occupational and income position, the educational attainments of Mexican-Americans also rank substantially below those of the majority of the population.

Many adult education programs have been developed to serve the needs of this segment of the population. Some of these programs have admitted to frustration, offering the rationale that the Spanish-surname adult is "happy" where he is. Studies by Horacio Ulibarri of the University of New Mexico relative to the social and educational characteristics of the Spanish-speaking adults in the Southwest drew conclusions to the effect that it is not a matter of "not caring," rather that it is a matter of timidity and passivity--a matter of self-confidence relative to entry into the American educational society.

In the opinions of many who have worked with them, Spanish-surname adults are likely to become possessive about some activity in which they play a major role. Therefore, it is proposed that organization, by adult educators, of local advisory committees made up of the adults to be served would tend to overcome this timidity and passivity and to make education a part of their everyday lives.

A. The Objectives of an Advisory Committee

The concept that an advisory committee brings about cooperation and coordination of all community resources is not new.

It is, in fact, one traditional to adult education. However, adults with Spanish surnames, for reasons of language or culture, may be somewhat timid about school. It is believed, therefore, that a local advisory committee would be even better insurance of the success of an adult education program designed to serve that particular segment of the population.

This committee might assist and advise the adult education administrator in the following:

1. Developing programs in cooperation with other agencies; e.g., community action programs, health and welfare programs

2. Mobilizing and coordinating all related community resources in an effort to serve the parents of children who have been classified as educationally deprived; the parents can then become resources for their children

3. Overall planning of the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program and disseminating information relative to the objectives of adult education

4. Acting as a board for review of the curriculum, materials, methods, and techniques to determine that the program is designed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking adult

B. The Composition of the Advisory Committee

Of the total membership of the advisory committee, no less than 50 percent should be residents of the area in which the adult education program will be concentrated; preference might be given to the target population itself. The remaining membership on the advisory committee should include representation from the school district staff, from the local community action agencies, from the nonpublic school agencies such as private and parochial schools, from migrant labor camps, and from the local community; e.g., civic, business, labor, ethnic, or religious groups. Other agencies of health and welfare that provide service to the schools' clientele might also be represented.

The adult educator and his superintendent will appoint people to the committee, selecting people not only because they represent a cross-section of all groups, but also because they have demonstrated stability, the ability to listen to people who have differing opinions, and the ability to compromise on major issues where there are seriously divergent opinions.

An adult educator and his advisers should be careful not to select a quiet and obedient committee; they should look for a

vocal and serious group that might have children in the schools and that will truly represent the opinions of that part of the school population which tends to be timid and passive.

C. The Operations of a Local Advisory Committee

1. If there is not a large percentage of the Spanish-surname population to be served in the area, the local advisory committee could meet four or five times a year. However, in the event the area has a "migrant condition" or other seasonal swell in area population of adults with Spanish surnames, it might be feasible for the advisory committee to meet once a month.

2. There should be a committee chairman and secretary, elected by the group, who would serve for the year. Minutes of the meetings should be kept.

3. The term of office of committee members should be decided by the committee.

4. The committee should hold open meetings and invite teachers, teacher aides, and other persons interested in education to the meetings so that other viewpoints and recommendations may be heard.

D. Conducting an Initial Meeting with No Current Project

The following excerpts from the publication "Guidelines for ESEA--Local Advisory Committees," published by Tulare County Community Action Agency and the Office of the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools, relate to conducting a meeting:

1. "The adult educator lists the problems as he sees them.

2. "The local advisory committee is asked to discuss and decide on the problems that they feel can be resolved.

3. "If the committee has more than eight members, other than school representatives, it might be feasible to divide the committee into two discussion groups.

4. "Solutions to problems are discussed and listed.

5. "The adult educator develops programs from this information.

6. "If a project is developed, the outline and cost estimates should be returned to the advisory committee for review and discussion.

7. "If the project is approved and begun, the advisory committee should be taken on a tour of the school to be shown what the project is doing.

8. "The committee should decide how often it should meet.

9. "In the spring, the project should be reviewed relative to its merits as well as to the needed improvements."

E. Conducting an Initial Meeting If the Project Has Already Begun

1. "The adult educator lists the problem that he feels needs to be corrected.

2. "The existing project is reviewed, with the committee members being given abstract copies of the project.

3. "The adult educator arranges for the committee members to visit and observe the project in action. Visits should be arranged in small groups if the committee has more than eight members.

4. "Each component of the project is explained in the meeting and panels of speakers drawn from personnel who work in the project should present a short program relative to what they do; e.g., teachers, teacher aides, counselors, community aides, etc.

5. "In the spring, the good, fair, and poor components are identified by the adult administrator and by the committee members. Those ranked as fair and poor are discussed (in small groups) relative to improvement."

F. Suggestions for Training the Local Advisory Committee in Group Processes

In many areas, the local advisory committee may not serve the purposes for which it is intended. It may very well be that, except for the educators, the committee members have no experience in the group process. Therefore, it might be advantageous to consider the organization of training programs for those who would serve on a local advisory committee, which would then allow for group interaction and a positive resolution of the areas of concern to the adult education administrator. There is a list of selected references following which might be of interest.

1. The operation of such a training program might include:

   a. Informing the members of the local advisory committee of the tasks the committee should perform

   b. Demonstrating how a committee functions

   c. Providing examples of and suggestions for good adult education programs

   d. Orientating committee members relative to the identification of a worthwhile adult education project

2. Training plan

   a. Organization

      Training Centers should be established. It is suggested that the Community Action Council be asked to sponsor the training project and to mail invitations. If possible, home calls should be made on low-income members in order to urge attendance and to arrange for their transportation to the training sessions if necessary.

   b. Content of sessions

      (1) The first session might be spent in answering questions. If the training group is broken into smaller groups, the first activity could be orientation. The members of the training group could then reassemble for panel-type large-group discussions. This begins a familiarization with large-group processes and the development of interaction within the group.

      It is important that the next meeting date be announced and that members of the training group be invited to ask for help with transportation needs if necessary.

      (2) In the second session, the larger group can be broken into smaller groups again. Those conducting the training session should pass out lists of sample adult education programs and their estimated costs. These programs should be discussed relative to the objectives and proposed funding, the discussion culminating in listing two to five questions that the smaller group wants to have answered

in general session. The larger group should then reconvene, and have the questions answered by panel members.

It is important to announce the next meeting date and to inquire about transportation needs.

(3) The third session could treat the topic of conducting meetings. Explanations should be given of the organization of a committee. The committee trainers should "role play" a meeting. There should also be a question-and-answer period.

It is important to remember to announce the date of the next meeting and to arrange for any needed transportation.

(4) The fourth session should consider the programs and issues with which the committee will be faced.

At this time it would be interesting to take the training group through a problem-solving process, with discussions of the various acts involved in the process so that the group would have some familiarity with the actions necessary when attempting to arrive at a group decision.

It is important to establish a meeting date for this group at a later time to discuss what the local advisory committees have accomplished and what progress they feel has been made.

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